

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05
INR-10 L-03 ACDA-12 NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 SP-02
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FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8603
INFO AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 1602

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINS, NATO, SS, CD, MO, MR, FR, DA, AG, US
SUBJ: RESPONSE TO ISSUES RAISED DURING AMBASSADOR'S TOURS D'HORIZON
WITH GOA

REF: STATE 128469

1. I CONVEYED THE POINTS MADSIN REFTTEL TO MFA DIRECTOR GENERAL
FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS ABDELKADER BOUSSELHAM ON MAY 24. IN HIS CUS-
TOMARY FRIENDLY WAY BOUSSELHAM MADE THE FOLLOWING REMARKS:
A. THE LAST ATTACK BY FRENCH JAGUARS (NORTHWEST OF ZOUERATE MAY
3) WAS THE LATEST IN A SERIES OF ESCALATING FRENCH MILITARY ACTIONS
STARTING WITH MAURITANIA, THEN MOROCCO AND NEXT THE MOROCCAN-OCCUPIED
PART OF THE WESTERN SAHARA. HE IMPLIED THAT THE NEXT SUCH ACTION
COULD BE IN ALGERIA. BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, HE SAID, THERE WERE NO
FRENCH NATIONALS IN THE WESTERN SAHARA WHERE THE LATEST FRENCH
ATTACK TOOK PLACE.

B. THE RESPONSE FROM MY GOVERNMENT THAT I HAD GIVEN HIM DID NOT
HELP TO SETTLE THE WESTERN SAHARAN PROBLEM BUT, RATHER, IT FURTHER
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COMPLICATED THE SITUATION BECAUSE, HE ASSERTED, THE PROBLEM IS
NOT MILITARY, BUT POLITICAL. HE SAID WE WERE GIVING FRANCE GROUNDS
FOR "PRETENDING TO SAFEGUARD FRENCH CITIZENS." HE VERBALLY WRUNG
HIS HANDS OVER THE NUMBERS OF FRENCH, MOROCCAN AND MAURITANIAN
TROOPS ALREADY COMMITTED TO WHAT HE SAID WAS DEPRIVING THE WESTERN
SAHARANS OF THEIR RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION. HE THEREFORE
DECRIED ALL THE MORE THE FACT THAT FRANCE, A PERMANENT MEMBER

OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESPONSIBLE FOR WORLD PEACE AND SECURITY AND ONE AMONG FIVE IN THE WORLD WITH SUCH GREAT POWER AS THAT OF THE VETO WOULD ENGAGE IN WHAT HE TERMED "19TH CENTURY GUNBOAT DIPLOMACY."

C. ALGERIA IS FAVORABLY DISPOSED TO FINDING A POLITICAL SOLUTION TO THE WESTERN SAHARA PROBLEM THAT WILL INVOLVE "CONSULTATIONS WITH THE PEOPLE"; NATIONS LIKE FRANCE, THE U.S.S.R. AND THE U.S. WHO MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH ALL ELEMENTS IN NORTHWEST AFRICA, HESAID, "MUST THINK, THEY MUST HELP US FIND A SOLUTION."

D. "YOU SAY THE FRENCH HAVE THE RIGHT TO KILL MEMBERS OF THE POLISARIO; THIS IS CRIMINAL BECAUSE IT DOES NOT MAKE FOR PEACE. I DO NOT SEE HOW THE UNITED STATES CAN ACCEPT FRENCH COLONIALIST ACTIONS. WE ARE PASSIONATELY DEVOTED TO PEACE AND TO BUILDING OUR OWN COUNTRY AND TO ALLOWING OTHERS TO DO THE SAME. WE THEREFORE OPPOSE ANY FOREIGN INTERVENTION ANYPLACE... IN THE LONG TERM OUR POSITION ON THIS ISSUE WILL BE SEEN TO BE THE MORE MORAL ONE... THE WESTERN SAHARA IS A SICK REGION AND WASHINGTON SHOULD HELP US RESOLVE THE PROBLEM," HE SAID.

E. YOU AMERICANS ARE MORE REASONABLE, HE CONTINUED: YOU SIMPLY TAKE YOUR CITIZENS OUT OF PLACES LIKE SHABA AND LEBANON. BUT THE FRENCH TELL THEIR CITIZENS TO REMAIN IN TROUBLED AREAS. THEY THEN FEED THE WAR, MAKING IT EVEN MORE DANGEROUS FOR THIER OWN CITIZENS AND MAKING FOR EVEN GREATER INSTABILITY IN THE REGION, HE ASSERTED. IN THE SAME VEIN HE NOTED WITH AN AIR OF UTMOST DISMAT THAT PRESIDENT MOBUTU WAS ACCUSING ALGERIA OF CONFIDENTIAL

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COMPLICITY IN THE SHABA AFFAIR (SEE ALGIERS 1594).

F. WITHOUT WAITING FOR A REJOINDER, BOUSSELHAM ASKED ME TO EXCUSE HIM FOR HIS REMARKS IN D. ABOVE. HE FELT VERY PASSIONATELY ABOUT THE WESTERN SAHARA PROBLEM, HE SAID, AND BECAUSE HE HAD A STRONG SENSE OF AMERICANS' DEDICATION TO LIBERTY AND JUSTICE HE FELT WE SHOULD BE BETTER ABLE TO SEE THINGS THE ALGERIAN WAY. IN ANY EVENT, HE ASSERTED, WE MUST ALWAYS TALK TO ONE ANOTHER ABOUT THESE MATTERS; WE MUST CONTINUE THE DIALOG EVEN IF IT SEEMS TO BE A DIALOG OF THE DEAF.

2. COMMENT:

A. I MADE THIS DEMARCHE ALMOST RELUCTANTLY, FEELING THAT WE MIGHT HAVE HIT THE ALGERIANS QUITE HARD ENOUGH ALREADY ON THE WESTERN SAHARA QUESTION (ALGIERS 0967). BUT IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, I SENSED THAT BOUSSELHAM TOOK IT WELL. AND I BELIEVE IN MAKING KNOWN OUR SUPPORT FOR THE FRENCH WE MAY HAVE NUDGED THE ALGERIAN SIDE SLIGHTLY CLOSER TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE.

B. BOUSSELHAM TOOK ABSOLUTELY NO ISSUE WITH THE DENIAL OF ANY POSSIBLE NATO COMPLICITY IN THE FRENCH JAGUAR OPERATIONS.

C. BASED ON CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE AVAILABLE TO THE EMBASSY INCLUDING ALGERIA'S HOSTING OF CONGO LIBERATION FRONT MEETINGS, BOUSSELHAM'S REMARKS ABOUT THE SHABA AFFAIR COULD

CALL INTO QUESTION THE SINCERITY OF HIS OTHER ASSERTIONS.
HOWEVER, TO THE EXTENT ALGERIA MAY HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN SHABA II,
THE ACTION WOULD HAVE BEEN AT THE PRESIDENCY, WITH SUCH OFFICIALS
AS PRESIDENTIAL ADVISER SLIMANE HOFFMAN, AND FOREIGN MINISTRY
OFFICIALS AT EVEN THE HIGHEST LEVEL MIGHT INDEED HAVE KNOWN
NOTHING ABOUT IT. STEPHAN

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